

U.S. puzzled by Israeli charge it is consorting with Arab states

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has said it was confused by Israeli accusations that it was consorting with Arab states to halt a wave of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens accused Washington Wednesday of helping Arab states draft a U.N. resolution condemning Jewish settlement in the occupied territories and East Jerusalem.

In a rare publicised rebuke, Arens summoned U.S. Ambassador William Brown, saying the meeting was necessary because the Security Council resolution was "dedicated to an Arab attack on the right of Jews to immigrate to Israel."

"We find the foreign minister's comments a little confusing," said State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler.

"We wholeheartedly support Jewish emigration from the

Soviet Union and absorption... into Israel. We have and we will continue to press for steps that facilitate and expedite that emigration, such as direct flights, and minister Arens is very well aware of this," she said.

Tutwiler said Washington drew a distinction between Soviet Jews moving to Israel, which it supported, and their absorption into Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, which it opposed.

A State Department official said the Arab states had been unable to agree on a resolution and had requested an indefinite postponement.

Arab envoys at the United Nations Thursday rejected several U.S. amendments to a prop-

osed Security Council Resolution deploring Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

"There are several amendments that the Americans have submitted that don't meet with the approval of the Arab group," said Ambassador Karim Al Shaker of Bahrain, current chairman of the group.

The draft resolution, sponsored by the Council's Non-Aligned members, stems from a debate requested by the Soviet Union in a Feb. 12 letter citing "unlawful Israeli moves to settle the occupied territories."

In the past the United States has called Israeli settlements an obstacle to peace but stopped short of describing them as illegal.

Ambassador Abdalla Al Ashtal of South Yemen, a member of the Security Council, said the draft already had the backing of 14 of the Council's 15 members. The Arab group was seek-

ing a unanimous vote.

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said the United States had merely been doing its job as a permanent member of the Security Council.

"We have not taken a position on that resolution or any specific resolution," he said.

Israel said the United States had been helping the Arab states draft a milder version of the resolution instead of vetoing it outright.

Tutwiler's mild comments appeared to signal that Washington was not interested in escalating its war of words with Israel, which in recent weeks has strained relations between the two countries.

The United States is still hoping for a government to emerge from Israel's political crisis capable and willing to move towards dialogue with Palestinians, although this appears increasingly unlikely.

Arab papers urge summit unity

NICOSIA (R) — Arab commentators urged their leaders Friday to show a united front at summit talks this month despite the refusal of Syria to attend the meeting in Baghdad.

"A united Arab strategy should be drawn up at the summit to face the many challenges (facing Arabs), irrespective of marginal differences among certain states," Saudi Arabia's Al Jazirah newspaper said.

Saudi Arabia is one of 18 of the Arab League's 22 members who have pledged to attend the summit, opening on May 28 to discuss Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel and a row with Western countries over alleged Iraqi military purchases.

It will be held two days before U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev hold their own superpower summit in Washington.

The meeting in Iraq should "achieve Arab unity and recon-

ciliation between Baghdad and Damascus to... confront the Zionist entity," said Bahrain's Akhbar Al Khaleej paper.

Syria has said it will not attend the summit in Iraq. Damascus backed Iran in the eight-year Gulf war that halted in 1988 and Baghdad has since supported opponents of Syria in Lebanon.

The semi-official Syrian newspaper Al Thawra said the summit would not serve higher Arab interests and lacked "clarity of aims and strategic views."

"It will merely be serving personal ends," the paper said without elaborating.

Okaz newspaper of Saudi Arabia said the kingdom's agreement to attend "reaffirms its concern to consolidate Arab unity in facing all challenges."

Riyadh earlier said a summit should not be held unless all Arab League members attended. Riyadh, along with Egypt and other states, has tried this month

to reconcile Iraq and Syria.

The Palestinian newspaper Al Quds, published in the Israeli-occupied areas, also called for Arabs to bury their differences.

"The Palestinian issue... must prompt Arab leaders to rise to the level of their historic responsibility."

The Palestine Liberation Organisation is alarmed that moves towards Middle East peace have stalled and that many Soviet Jewish immigrants will settle in the occupied areas, blocking Palestinian hopes of setting up an independent state.

Israeli officials say 800,000 Soviet Jews could arrive by 1995.

Qatar's Al-Raya newspaper called for "intensive Arab efforts to persuade Damascus to attend the summit and resolve its differences with Baghdad."

Morocco, Libya and Somalia have not said whether they would attend.

U.N. chief to discuss Gulf peace in Baghdad

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who is trying to revive stalled Gulf peace talks, will meet Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Rome Monday, a U.N. spokesman has said.

Perez de Cuellar, on a European trip, had talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati in New York last month. The foreign ministers last met in Geneva in April 1989 but U.N. efforts to turn an August 1988 Iran-Iraq ceasefire into a full-fledged peace settlement have made scant progress.

Reports from the Gulf this week, however, said Iranian leaders were showing unusual interest in a message from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Neither side has disclosed the contents, or even the exact nature of the unprecedented message. Iran's ally Syria has referred to it as a personal letter to President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani from Hussein.

Rafsanjani said cautiously Wednesday that he saw "some signs" of good intention from Iraq. He has also written to Syrian President Hafez Ali Assad about the Iraqi message, which was received at least 10 days ago.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati refused to discuss the letter on an Iranian television programme Thursday but said Tehran would welcome any proposal which promoted peace.

Iran's National Security Council discussed the letter from Iraq on May 1. Tehran Radio said it was about "peace negotiations and the regional situation."

Rafsanjani emerged as Iran's most powerful political leader after the death last year of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. According to the Iranian News Agency (IRNA) he said Wednesday "we are still not sure of the other side's good intentions, although some signs in this regard have been seen."

Damascus Radio reported that a message which President Assad received from Rafsanjani Thursday "dealt with the letter which was sent by the Iraqi president to the Iranian president."

Signs of possible movement in the Iran-Iraq stalemate coincide with high-level diplomacy over the past few weeks in which Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states have tried to patch up relations between Syria and Iraq.

Greek court grants bail to Briton in Iraqi gun row

PATRAS, Greece (R) — A Greek magistrate granted bail Friday to a British truck driver arrested for transporting parts of an alleged Iraqi super-gun, his lawyer said.

"I expect that my client will be released within the day. The bail was set at \$33,000 which his family has accumulated," lawyer Alkeos Vgenopoulos told Reuters.

Paul Ashwell, 26, from Northampton, was arrested on April 20 in the western port of Patras with 29.5 tonnes of metal tubing which authorities said could form part of a giant gun.

Vgenopoulos said that under the bail terms Ashwell was banned from leaving the country and would have to report once a week to a police station.

Ashwell, who is charged with illegal transport of weapons, faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted. No trial date has been set.

The tubing on Ashwell's truck was similar to a shipment of eight steel tubes seized earlier in Britain and said by British customs to be part of a 40-metre gun which would enable Iraq to bombard rivals like Israel or Iran with nuclear or chemical weapons.

Iraq has denied the tubes were meant to build a weapon and said they were intended for use in a petrochemical plant.

Vgenopoulos said a public prosecutor was expected to review the case in the next two weeks and could drop the charges against Ashwell.

"I believe everything will now go for the better and Ashwell's odyssey will end soon. He did not know the tube he was carrying was part of a weapon and everybody knows that he is innocent," he said.

The British Foreign Office said Friday it had already told the Greek authorities that Britain did not believe Ashwell had knowingly committed any offence.

British lorry drivers said Wednesday they planned a demonstration to back him, driving their trucks in a huge convoy down to the port of Dover.

The Iraqi affair damaged relations between London and Baghdad still further following Iraq's execution in March of London-based journalist Farzad Bazoft after finding him guilty of spying.

Soon afterwards, British and American customs intercepted a consignment of electronic components bound for Iraq and said they were triggers for nuclear weapons.

The U.S. State Department said Thursday it was looking into an Iraqi statement that it had legally imported electronic components from the United States in 1988 that Washington believes could be used as triggers for nuclear weapons.

"In response to our request, the government of Iraq informed us on May 10 that the capacitors displayed by President Saddam Hussein were imported legally from the U.S. in 1988," said State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler.

Decision on detained Kuwaitis due today

CAIRO (R) — The Kuwaiti government will decide Saturday what to do with eight pro-democracy activists detained in the northern Gulf state, lawyers said Friday.

The eight men were arrested Tuesday for holding what the government said was an illegal political meeting to urge a boycott of June 10 elections for an Interim National Assembly.

"They are being very well treated and comfortable. They even chose food from an open buffet," one activist who visited them said.

Leftist physician and veteran Arab nationalist Ahmad Al Khattib, Kuwait's first health minister, is being kept at a state security building in Kuwait city, while the other seven are being held at a police station in Shuwaikh industrial area.

State prosecutors have questioned all eight men and defence lawyers said the authorities would either release the group on bail Saturday or hold them for an additional 21 days for further investigations.

A newspaper in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said a group of intellectuals from the UAE had sent a cable to Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah asking for the release of the men.

U.S. Congress examines Israeli rights abuses in occupied Arab lands

WASHINGTON (USIA) — In the two and a half years of the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, violations of internationally recognised human rights have multiplied, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Richard Schifter has told a congressional panel.

He added, however, "we must recognize that the ultimate answer to the problems in peace — which can only be attained by negotiations among the parties involved."

Testifying before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East and on Human Rights and International Organizations, Schifter said that among the most serious human rights concerns in the occupied territories are "the nature of the response" of the Israeli soldiers, whose live fire has resulted in civilian deaths, and, more recently, the killing of Palestinians by fellow-Palestinians.

"The number of Palestinians killed in 1990 in intra-Palestinian violence is now equal to the number killed by the Israeli army during the same period," Schifter said.

He pointed to the nearly 23-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the "unresolved 42-year state of war between Israel and its neighbours" that underlie the "peace issue" on which the U.S. government has focused its efforts in trying to bring about negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis.

Schifter said, "any discussion of the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza must start with recognition of the fact that they are lands under military occupation and under a military government." Military occupation is "by definition non-democratic," he said.

Schifter appeared before the panel with John Hirsch, director for Israel and Arab-Israeli affairs at the State Department. Both were questioned about issues ranging from the closing of schools and universities to conditions in prisons and the equitable availability of water in the occupied Arab territories.

Asked by subcommittee Chairman Lee Hamilton about the status of six West Bank universities, which have been closed by the Israelis for two and a half years, Hirsch said, "we have pressed repeatedly for those universities to be reopened and feel it is a real loss and does not help the situation to have the universities closed."

Schifter, in response to the same question, noted that secondary schools are now open and that junior colleges are about to open. Yet to be resolved, he said, is the reopening of the six West Bank universities. "The Israeli government has not responded" to urging by the United States on the issue, he said.

Asked by Hamilton to assess a series of human rights complaints, which he said he had received, Schifter said that the current statistics reflect that the problem of excessive force is getting better and that the Israeli policy of deportations has ended. Schifter said the number of persons held for administrative detention was down to 800 at the beginning of this May.

As for treatment while in detention, he said the problems reported before, such as beating, "do occur upon arrest." When pressed to amplify on prison conditions, he acknowledged complaints of delayed access to prisoners, including children. Schifter also noted that the prisons are "overcrowded" and that "circumstances under which people live are substantially less than satisfactory."

Asked to assess the problem of demolishing homes of Palestinians found guilty of terrorist activity, Schifter pointed out that many innocent people lose homes as a result of the policy. "I think that is one on the 'short list' (high priority) we ought to press very hard on," he said.

While the number of demolitions appeared to be down in April, Schifter said, it was too soon to know whether or not this is a trend. On the issue of the health and medical care, Schifter said, "there is no doubt that as a result of the intifada there has been a deterioration in all public service" and that "Israeli funding for the hospitals has decreased."

Asked about Israeli policies concerning freedom of the press, Schifter said censorship still continues for the Arabic — and English-language publications and that translations and republications are censored as well.

Asked by Representative Wayne Owens (Democrat of Utah) if the United States has heard an explanation about why a number of Palestinian charitable organizations have been closed by the Israeli government, Schifter said the explanation given is that "something other than activities for a charitable purpose are among the activities of the organisation."

Queried by Douglas Bereuter (Republican of Nebraska) about Israeli government policies regarding water rights in the occupied Arab territories, Hirsch said that a lot of water resources developed over the past 20 years have been for Israeli settlements. He said there has been a scarcity of water throughout the Middle East — "More in Gaza than the West Bank, so water availability for Palestinians is a very serious problem."

On a per capita basis, Hirsch said "more water is available to Israeli settlers than to Palestinians."

Bereuter urged the State Department to look at the number of well drilling permits that goes to Palestinians, because... they cannot proceed with agricultural development if there are no permits available.

Asked about the current status of Palestinian freedom to travel, Schifter commented only that "the situation is getting less bad."

Asked by Hamilton about the seriousness of the problem of caravans, Schifter said that "among the issues, this is one I simply would accept happens when you have a military law situation and acts of violence have occurred." He said U.S. officials have pressed the case, however.

Both Schifter and Hirsch took sharp issue with the charge that the United States has diminished its concern for human rights because of the peace process.

"There is no such trade off," Hirsch said. But he added, "I do feel that the underlying answer to human rights problems is the advancement of the peace process."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEFS

Pyeongyang criticises Israel

TOKYO (AP) — North Korean President Kim Il Sung has criticised Israeli plans to resettle Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, North Korea's official media said Friday. Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency said Kim made the criticism in a speech at a banquet held in Pyongyang Thursday night to honour Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman Yasser Arafat. Arafat arrived in Pyongyang earlier Thursday on his fourth visit to North Korea, which he first visited in 1981, the news agency said. He made his most recent visit last June.

Turkish troops kill 4 rebel Kurds

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — Turkish troops have killed four Kurdish rebels in two separate clashes and uncovered a major explosives cache, officials said Friday. The guerrillas of the separatist Marxist Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) were killed Wednesday and Thursday near Sirnak town in the southeastern province of Sirnak, they said. The deaths brought this month's toll in the six-year insurgency to 51,30 of them rebels. Troops found a PKK mountain hideout in the eastern province of Van containing hundreds of land mines and other explosives, the officials said.

Pollard's wife blasts Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — An American woman jailed for more than three years in the United States after helping her husband spy for Israel accused the Jewish state Friday of doing nothing to assist them. Anne Henderson-Pollard, 30-year-old wife of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard, spoke to Israel Radio's Washington correspondent. She was released from jail on parole in March. "Why isn't the (Israeli) government involved? I mean, My God, I've given 40 months of my life to go to prison over this. They did absolutely nothing for me. I'm only speaking of the government," she said. Her husband, and American Jew who said he acted out of love for Israel, was jailed for life in 1987. Anne initially received two five-year sentences after pleading guilty to helping her husband pass secret files to Israel. Asked if Israel had sent her money as alleged in news reports, she said: "If that were true, why I am sitting here destitute unable to even afford a residence, a closet? I have no money. There is no money forthcoming."

Aden sends home E. German experts

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — An estimated 200 East German security experts have been sent home by South Yemen because their government has not been paying them their salaries for months, a Saudi Arabian newspaper reported Friday. The daily Ashraq Al Awsat said the cutoff in pay followed the political changes that took place in Eastern Europe. The newspaper's report was attributed to unnamed informed sources in Aden. The Aden authorities were left with the choice of either keeping the experts on new individual contracts or sending them home, and the second alternative won the day, the paper said.

Iran arrests 20 over dress code

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian vice patrols arrested 20 people at the start of a crackdown on clothing which reveals too many curves or too much flesh. Tehran residents said the patrols turned out in force in the capital Thursday, the first day of an official campaign to "fight manifestations of corruption." They stopped and took down names of women wearing make-up or dressed in clothes which failed to cover everything but their face and hands. Women in bright outfits or clothes that showed their curves were also stopped. Men are not allowed to display too much of their arms or chests, and smoked windows on cars are also forbidden. Violators of the Islamic dress code may be punished by up to 74 lashes and authorities have said names of lesser offenders would be kept on a computer list for further action.

Irbid moves to enforce ban

(Continued from page 1)

applies to new applicants, he added.

Although Ministry of Interior officials have been denying reports of the ban to the press and to various individuals, including parliamentarians, they have not publicly denied the existence of the order.

A copy of the order, dated April 21, 1990, and signed by Minister of Interior Salem Masa'deh, was made available to the Jordan Times. It says: "The management and employees of female beauty salons to be licensed as of this date will be limited to women."

Ambiguity surrounds the extent of the decision's application, according to hairdressers and members of the Hairdressers' Association. "The regula-

tion does not explain what happens to owners who try to renew their yearly permits," said a member of the executive committee of the Amman-based association.

A prominent lawyer explained that the ban would affect new applicants as well as salon owners. "Once you go to renew your licence you have to meet all the regulations governing the licence," he said. "By adding the ban to already existing regulations governing the operations of beauty parlours means that it has to be met when obtaining a new licence or when renewing it."

A delegation from the Hairdressers' Association has already met with Ministry of Interior Under-Secretary Saleh Hamad who assured them that the ban would only affect new applicants, according to association members.

Islamists sweep campus election

(Continued from page 1)

country.

In effect, the independents' target is to resurrect a short-lived students federation for the University of Jordan which was set up in 1972 and was frozen two years later. Instead, the university's administration formed 34 academic

societies, each representing a section of the university's 13 faculties. Ever since the Nov. 8 elections which produced an 80-seat House dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, Jordan's universities have turned into scenes of intensive campaigning aimed at coercing the administrations into accepting a fully-fledged student federation.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programme
17:10 Educational programme
18:00 News summary
18:05 Message from Iraq
18:25 A play by Shakespeare
19:10 Local programme
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Consumer's Guide
22:25 Local programme
23:00 News in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

17:45 Champs Elysees
19:00 News in French
19:15 Aujourd'hui en France
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Surgical Spirit
21:00 Doc: "Mizant and Selznig"
21:30 Doc: "News in English"
22:20 Feature film: "An Unsubtle Job for a Woman"

PRAYER TIMES

04:00 Fajr
05:30 (Sunrise) Duha
12:30 Dhuhr

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swatish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
American Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 685326
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be relatively cold and winds will be westerly moderate to fresh.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

causing dust in the eastern parts of the country. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly fresh and sea calm.

Amman 9/21
Aqaba 17/30
Dera'a 11/26
Jordan Valley 15/28

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 20, Aqaba 29. Humidity readings: Amman 39 per cent, Aqaba 14 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Al Hourani 625478
Dr. Yehia Abdul Rabin 736074
Dr. Hani Al Zureiqi 783708
Dr. Mohammad Abn Makfour 793444
Fina pharmacy 641912
Fendous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairooth pharmacy 626762
Al Salim pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Smeisani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Nabil Adal 'Ola (—)

Al Sharas' pharmacy (985238)
ZARQA:
Dr. Husna Mahmood (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 243402
Traffic Police 980390
Public Security Department (63021)
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 601230
Overseas Calls 601230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
04:45 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
05:15 Aqaba (RJ)
05:30 Cairo (RJ)
05:35 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
05:45 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (RJ)
05:55 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ)
12:15 New Delhi (RJ)
12:15 Helsinki, Aqaba (RJ)
16:00 New York, Montreal (RJ)
16:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
16:45 Cairo (RJ)
17:00 Baghdad (RJ)
19:40 Tripoli (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
05:25 Beirut (ME)
16:00 Baghdad (IA)
16:05 Cairo (ME)
16:05 Fozna 300 / 250
16:40 Riyadh (SV)
17:00 Kuwait (KU)
17:20 Dubai (AZ)
18:30 Dubai (EK)

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05:30 Cairo (RJ)
05:35 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
05:45 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (RJ)
05:55 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ)
12:15 New Delhi (RJ)
12:15 Helsinki, Aqaba (RJ)
16:00 New York, Montreal (RJ)
16:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
16:45 Cairo (RJ)
17:00 Baghdad (RJ)
19:40 Tripoli (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
05:25 Beirut (ME)
16:00 Baghdad (IA)
16:05 Cairo (ME)
16:05 Fozna 300 / 250
16:40 Riyadh (SV)
17:00 Kuwait (KU)
17:20 Dubai (AZ)
18:30 Dubai (EK)

MARKET PR

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

ACC labour ministers meet in Sana'a

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the 4th meeting of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) labour ministers, which will be held in Sana'a May 15. The Jordanian delegation to the meetings will be headed by Minister of Labour Qasem Obeidat. The three-day meeting will crystallise a mechanism to enhance existing cooperation among the ACC countries.

Soviet ambassador visits Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Soviet ambassador at large Igor Andropov Thursday arrived in Amman at the beginning of a two-day official visit to Jordan for talks with Jordanian officials on issues of mutual concern.

EC may help paper industry

AMMAN (Petra) — A team from the European Community (EC) Investment Bank Friday visited the Arab Company for International Investment and Trade and inspected the company's factories. The team said they would discuss with European companies, producing the same line of products, to set up a joint Jordanian-European project, or to provide the company with technical expertise in a bid to reoperate the company's soap and paper tissues production. Reoperating the factories will provide 100 new job opportunities.

RJ advisory council holds meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — The second meeting for the Royal Jordanian (RJ) advisory council starts here Saturday with several Jordanian and world advisors participating. The two-day meetings will focus on issues of interest to the Royal Jordanian, including its operation plan and financing, as well as tourism in Jordan and aviation cooperation in the Arab Cooperation Council states.

Badran details Jordan's stand on domestic, Middle East issues

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has succeeded over the past few months to contain the economic crisis in Jordan and to stabilise the rate of exchange of the Jordanian dinar in its drive to implement an economic restructuring programme, Prime Minister Mudar Badran was quoted as saying in an interview published in London.

"Current policies adopted by the government are intended to reduce the margin of deficit in the national budget, increase national exports and encourage investments," the Prime Minister said in statements published in the London-based magazine, "Al Majallah."

Referring to the corruption cases in Jordan, he said that the issue was dwelt on by the public prosecutor together with the judicial authorities. "The government, for its part, will soon submit to the Lower House of Parliament a draft law on dealing with economic crimes," Badran said.

In reply to a question about Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation on the local and regional levels, the Prime Minister said that a recent visit to Jordan by

Palestine President Yasser Arafat was dedicated to discussing means of helping the Palestinian people under Israeli rule, a pan-Arab strategy to deal with threats posed to the Arab Nation in general and Palestine and Jordan in particular, and the need to hold an Arab summit on these issues.

But Badran denied that discussion covered the reopening of Palestinian offices in Jordan.

Referring to incidents in which certain elements infiltrated from Jordan into the occupied Palestinian land, the Prime Minister said they were of an individual and isolated nature; he also said that all Arab states confronting Israel realise the need for ensuring Jordan's stability and security so as to deny Israel the chance to exploit and benefit from such incidents.

Referring to the up-coming summit, he said that Jordan and Palestine had been spearheading efforts to convene this summit which is expected to chart a pan-Arab strategy to deal with Soviet Jewish immigration and other pressing issues.

King Hussein's endeavours at

the international level, the Prime Minister said, has helped to spread awareness among the world public opinion about dangers inherent in this immigration.

He said pan-Arab efforts are continuing to convince the Soviet Union of the grave consequences of this immigration which aims at uprooting Palestinians from their homeland.

"Apart from launching efforts for the coming summit, Jordan and Palestine have agreed on coordinating efforts in political, informational, educational, cultural, economic and social cooperation that would benefit the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," the Prime Minister said.

Asked on the United States position with regard to the Middle East issue, the Prime Minister expressed doubts about the possibility of Washington changing its stand an exercising pressure on Israel because of the Jewish lobby's pressure on the United States Congress. "But this should not deter the Arabs from pursuing efforts to exercise pressure on the U.S. administration," the Prime Minister said.

Unions to discuss Jewish immigration

AMMAN (J.T.) — Heads and representatives of various professional associations in the Arab World will Saturday open a two-day meeting in Amman to discuss the question of Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union and East Europe.

RJ to fly twice a week to Canada

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national airline, will operate two weekly flights from Amman to Montreal via New York in accordance with an agreement formally signed in Amman Thursday.

The agreement, which was initiated here in 1988, is bound to promote economic and touristic cooperation between Jordan and Canada, according to Mahmoud Baldan, director general of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) who signed the agreement with Canada's ambassador here.

According to Dr. Mamdouh Al Abbadi, the two-day conference will be followed by a march in the Jordan Valley towards the King Hussein bridge in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian people and to emphasise the Palestinians' right to return to their homeland.

Abbadi expected 5,000 people, including the representatives of the professional associations, to take part in the march. "At least 200 heads of Arab professional unions will be among those taking part in the May 14 march, a five kilometre stretch from the Martyrs monument near Karameh to the bridge," Abbadi, who is president of the Jordanian Professional Association said.

Abbadi, who is also chairman of a committee organising the march, said that the Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel and ways to support the 29-month-old intifada in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be the main topics on the conference's agenda.

EC, UNRWA sign convention

AMMAN (J.T.) — A new EC-UNRWA convention for the period 1990-1992 was signed recently in Brussels. EC Commissioner for Mediterranean Affairs Abel Matutes received in Brussels Giorgio Giacomelli, commissioner general for UNRWA, for the occasion.

The new convention makes available some 72 million ECU (JD 58 million) for the three year period as a direct financial contribution to UNRWA's educational programme for Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied territories. This is in addition to the European Community's food and contributions to UNRWA, which have an average value of 20 million ECU per year.

This marks the 7th such convention signed since 1971 between the community and UNRWA. Community aid for the period 1972-89 is estimated at 429 million ECU.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Thursday presents gifts to a school administration in Hamadih during a tour of the south (Petra photo)

Queen visits south, hears demands for better living

KARAK (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein Thursday made an extensive tour of rural areas in the Karak and Tafleh governorates where she heard demands from the local residents for improved services and inspected living conditions of local families.

The Queen's first stop was at Hamadih village where she opened a health centre, inspected a school and presented toys, sports equipment and books to the school administration.

Accompanied by Minister of Social Development Abdul Majid Shreideh and other officials including Inaam Al Mufit, director of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), the Queen

visited a family and enquired about its living conditions.

She also took note of demands made at a public meeting by a local housewife from the Badia area calling for the establishment of community centres to provide local women with vocational training.

Other demands included a call on the government to open an animal feed distribution centre, provide better water, road services and housing units in the region.

According to the director of NHF's Social Development Programmes Department Issam Zawawi, NHF had earlier con-

ducted a survey on the living conditions of the village and made plans for improvements. He said NHF will, in cooperation with the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), establish a charitable society at Hamadih.

The Queen stopped later at Aimeh in the Tafleh region where she heard demand for a health centre, a community centre and for the National Aid Fund to provide financial assistance to the needy families.

The Queen opened a children's garden which cost JD 7,000 and called on the concerned authorities to allocate funds for the development of the mineral springs of nearby Afra.

Water supply to rural community, a must for its development — seminar

AMMAN (J.T.) — A regional seminar on rural water supply development which was concluded in Amman Thursday issued a set of recommendations calling among other things for clear policies, to be taken by countries in the region in the area of water supply and sanitation.

The seminar, organised under the auspices of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and attended by participants from 14 Arab countries, discussed a range

of subjects related to rural development, water supply and sanitation.

Recommendations said that supply of water to rural communities should be an integrated part of an overall strategy for the economic development of these communities; it underlined in particular the limitations of 'control-oriented' planning and blue print procedures in the execution and operation of rural water supply projects.

The integration of water, sanitation and hygiene education is essential for improving the health of the rural population and this requires close collaboration between concerned institutions, said the seminar's communiqué.

It called on governments to raise community awareness of good hygiene practices through mass media as well as propagation through personal communication and schools at the community level.



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An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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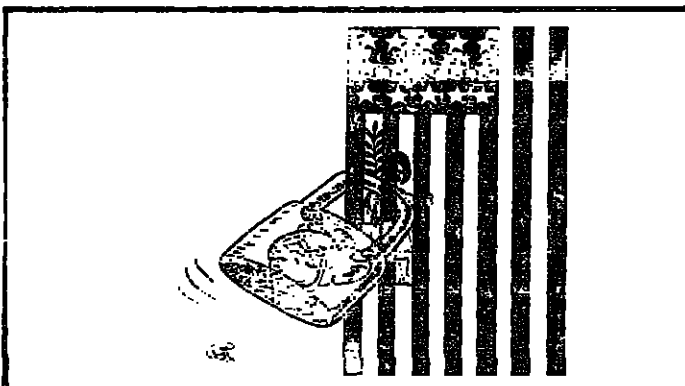
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Setting the record straight

IN THE COURSE of the last few days, the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) had more than one occasion to refute rumours that held the potential of poisoning the fiscal and economic atmosphere in the country. The governor of the CBJ submitted precise data fortified by undisputed figures about the bank's healthy reserves. The fact that the Central Bank's reserves are a hefty half a billion U.S. dollars already with projection that this amount can reach nearly three-fourths of a billion U.S. dollars before the end of the year is the clearest sign yet that Jordan's fiscal difficulties are being effectively redressed in a relatively short time. Yet, there is a limit to what the government can do to bolster the people's confidence in their own country and its ability to withstand all the economic and fiscal hardships imposed on it. Against the recurrent assurances from the government that the country's economy is well into recovery, it is imperative that Jordanians start believing in themselves and their country by putting a stop to the rumour mill that dishes out misinformation about the country's economic and fiscal strength.

In all fairness there are many Jordanians who gave full expression to their faith and confidence in their country by investing in various opportunities ranging from home construction to business or industrial ventures. It is common knowledge that Jordan's exports have multiplied many times over in the past year thus ushering in a new era in Jordanian development. Many manufacturing enterprises are also mushrooming all over the country thereby promising a brighter economic picture for the future. Meanwhile, the exchange rate of the dinar has stabilised and is expected to maintain its strength. Also the government says it is confident that more Arab and international aid is in the offing which of course could provide a potent shot in Jordan's economic arm. Accordingly the total picture that is emerging from the corroborated data and statistics submitted by the Central Bank offer a clean bill of economic health for the country that should put an end to the preposterous insinuations that the country's economy is deteriorating.



JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

THE Arab people of Palestine revolting against Israeli occupation are in dire need of support from their brethren in the Arab World and their zeal and determination can be strengthened if the Arab brothers are united behind their cause. said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Friday. The decision to hold a summit meeting in Baghdad, said the paper, can give hope to the Palestinians, and a joint action that could be agreed on at the coming summit is bound to bolster their self-confidence and enthusiasm. More talks about the intifada and mere speeches here and there can not lend any real help to the Palestinian people and only through joint action in support of the oppressed Palestinians in deeds rather than words can be of real help to them, the paper added. The people of Palestine who have now started their thirtieth month of uprising against oppression are looking towards their brothers who will be meeting in Baghdad and are hoping that the Arab heads of state will reach consensus on collective action in the face of Israel's arrogance, the paper continued. It said that what is needed now is a translation of the Arab countries' real feelings towards their brothers in Palestine.

A peaceful march towards the King Hussein Bridge on Monday symbolises the Arab people's determination to regain their right in Palestine, says Mahmoud Al Rimawi in his column Friday. The march is aimed also to focus the world public attention on the plight of the Palestinian people under occupation at a critical moment when the Israelis are escalating their oppression and absorbing more immigrants to settle on Arab land, says Rimawi in Al Ra'i Arabic daily. Determination to pursue the intifada on the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip can only promote the people in Jordan to carry out a token gesture in support of oppressed people's struggle and show the world the need for enabling the refugees who were turned out from their homeland to return and establish their state, the writer adds. The world should know, says Rimawi that the refugees have all the right to return to their own and lawful lands and must be helped to achieve that goal by all possible means.

Al Dustour daily dwelt again on the subject of an Arab summit meeting and said that it should be held in Baghdad which has been transformed into a real symbol for steadfastness in the face of aggression. By meeting in Baghdad the Arab heads of state emphasise the meaning of victory achieved by Iraq in the Gulf war and restate their determination to resist aggression from any source, said the paper. By meeting in Baghdad the Arabs will show beyond doubt that they are behind Iraq in thwarting Zionist conspiracies and defending Arab soil, the paper added. The paper called on Arab leaders to transcend all differences and meet in Baghdad in a show of solidarity with the Iraqi people in their fight for the defence of the Arab Nation.

View From Amman

Israel vs. the Arabs

Hostile opera, confused audience

WHILE black flags hung over the Holy Sepulchre Church, perhaps for the first time in its history, signifying Christian displeasure over the continued occupation by Jewish zealots of a building belonging to the Orthodox church, the stalemate over the forming of the Israeli cabinet also continued. Jewish rabbis from the various political parties in Israel, as well as a certain rabbi from Brooklyn, New York, remain undetermined as to whether to bless a cabinet by Peres or Shamir. In the meantime, the so-called peace process has halted. United States Secretary of State James Baker is saying nothing and we in the area are holding our breath to see what the rabbis will decide.

How did the affairs of the region descend to such abyssal depths? How did the world come not only to ignore but

also disdain the Arabs and their wishes? What is happening to us? To the Jews? are all questions that can, at least partially, be answered by a cursory examination of the Zionist view of the Arabs and also their view of their own exalted position as the "chosen people."

Two brief comments should be made before any such serious discussion. First, and most important is that we, Arabs are not wholly innocent of our plight or of what is happening to us. The victim is often a party to the crime against him. Our confusion, irrationality, lack of direction and organisation are but some of the reasons behind our degraded position in life. Second, there are a few Jews; some Zionists and some non-Zionists who also lament and decry what is happening to the

Israelis: the arrogance, the chauvinist extremist fundamentalism and the purely racist tendencies to name but a few phenomena. No less a man than Abba Eban, former Israeli minister of foreign affairs, complained of Israeli "religious extremism," adding (sic), that Zionism is a "rebellion" against the ascendancy of the rabbis, "against exclusivity." Be that as it may, the fact remains that what seems to be happening in Israel since 1967, indeed since 1948, even before, resembles a series of well produced, stage-managed affairs. Though the voices of the actors on the stage may at times appear discordant even contradictory, each separate voice along with the whole chorus is necessary for the final outcome.

While Menachem Begin, once called king of the Jews says something, his very able

and close associate, Yitzhak Shamir, says something else. David Levy is somewhere in the background uttering something while Arik Sharon in a loud soprano, screeches something else as well. Benjamin Begin, son of king Menachem, considered a rising Likud star, rumbles along joined vociferously by Eitan, Shamron, Arens and a great chorus.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the stage, the image of Golda Meir appears, flanked by Haim Weizman on one side and David Ben Gurion on the other. She looks tenderly at Shimon Peres as he takes centre stage, donning dove's feathers over his hawk's wings. Yitzhak Rabin, emerges from somewhere in the background, and though in the camp of the doves, still sporting his talons and hawkish attire to push him along. With him too is a

great chorus extolling alternately the virtues of peace and war at the same time.

Black robed rabbis with broad brimmed hats and locks of side hair intertwined with their long beards remain in the background. Watching the scene carefully a few onlookers cautiously venture onto the stage once in a while thundering one thing or another. The liturgy in the background, however, is constantly forming a formidable reverberating cacophony that keeps those on the stage, left, right and centre, utterly confused and disoriented. The movement of their collective torso bending forward and backward and their constant swaying give the appearance of constant motion while in fact all, including themselves, continue to be mesmerised in the same spot; and with them, they mesmerised the whole region; and through them they mesmerised the whole world, succeeding as they have in capturing through their litany and chanting the entire Western imagination and resources.

And we in the audience continue to sit glued to what-is taking place before us, wringing our hands, scratching our heads and wondering; wondering in wonderment about them and us caught like two great rein deer in the tundra whose horns have entangled in a silent death struggle panting and dying in the cold ice of ignorance and hatred while those around are cheering us along as heartless spectators could cheer the death struggle between two great gladiators.

Underneath it all lies a terrible and hateful ideology that cannot seem to be able to distinguish right from wrong.

Water! Water! next century's Mideast cry

By Fida Nasrallah

IT IS not oil, but water, which will be the most important geopolitical liquid in the Middle East in the next two decades. Control over the supply of fresh water sources—the lifeline of the Middle East—will be a crucial and dangerous goal. The "hydraulic imperative" could greatly affect the strategic balance of power in the area, may shape inter-Arab alliances, and dictate the future of the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Arab states will have to act in concert over the water issue if they are to prevent themselves from being caught in a position of strategic inferiority.

This impending water crisis is due to a variety of factors—the population boom, growing industrialisation, increasing urbanisation, and pollution. Moreover, it is not limited to any one region of the Middle East but applies to all three river systems in the area—namely, the basins of the Tigris-Euphrates, the River Jordan and the Nile.

Playing politics with the Euphrates

Turkey's decision last December to cut off the flow of the Euphrates for one month, in order to fill the reservoir of the Ataturk dam, precipitated a crisis for Ankara, Damascus and Baghdad which actually began brewing for some time. In fact ever since Turkey embarked upon its Grand Anatolian Project (GAP), Arab states have been apprehensive about the immediate and long-term implications of the Turkish plan. Indeed, once it is complete, GAP will comprise 21 dams and 17 hydro-electric power plants built on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and their tributaries. This grand project, of which the Ataturk Dam is a major part, aims to transform 9.5 per cent of Turkey's total land area into the breadbasket of the Middle East by the year 2005.

Turkey's project has, with some justification, aroused fears in both Syria and Iraq. GAP will not merely affect the quantity of water available to those two downstream countries but its quality as well. Moreover, they consider Turkey's decision to withhold the river's waters could not have been motivated by technical considerations as the reservoir could have been filled in a fortnight and water from the Karakaya dam could have been used. Turkey's decision, they believe, had less to do with hydrology than with politics.

A number of issues are adversely affecting Turkish-Syrian relations. The most important is Syria's continued support of the Kurdish Marxist PKK in border clashes with Turkey. Official Syrian talk of the "stolen province" of Alexandretta (now Hatay) and the downing of a Turkish civilian plane by Syrian fighters last October have done nothing to improve the situation. But the recent changes in the international climate have had an impact on both countries. Syria now has problems with the USSR, be it on the level of arms supplies, or on blanket approval of political adventures. And Turkey has been reassigned by the United States the role of acting as a counterweight to the regional powers in the Middle East and to push political events in a direction more in line with Western interests. From this perspective, Turkey's actions on the Euphrates could be seen as a political manoeuvre in tune with American interests in continuing to

pressure Syria outside the agreed Lebanese context.

Turkey's disagreement with Iraq, however, is different. Turkey reaped many economic rewards from Iraq (and Iran) during the Gulf war—its Kirkuk pipeline being the only outlet available for the export of Iraqi crude. Moreover, its concern over possible concessions to the Kurds from either Iran or Iraq (a dangerous precedent for the Turkish government) led Turkey to join forces with Iraq against the Kurds, even carrying out operations in northern Iraq with the consent of the Iraqi government.

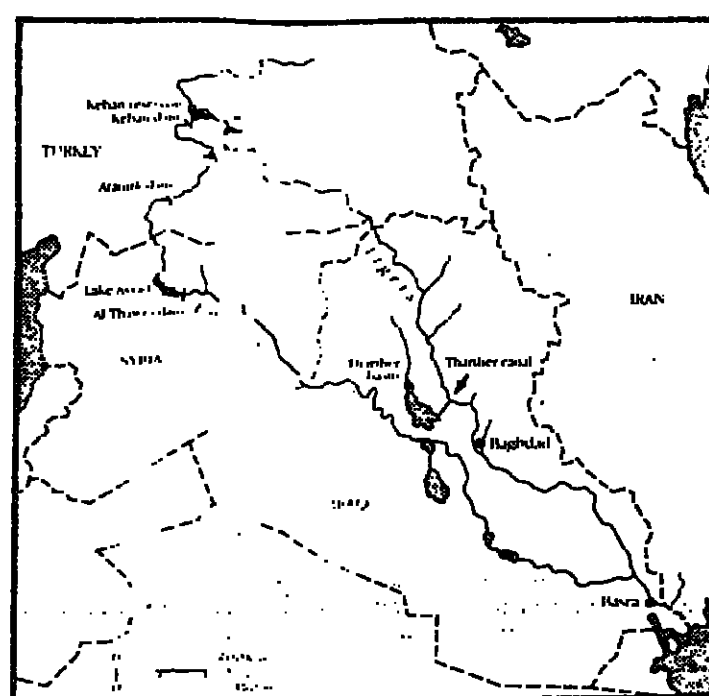
Despite such cooperation, however, Iraq's emergent position from the war as a formidable power in the Gulf has no doubt left the Turks uneasy. Ankara would, therefore, want to stem Iraq's influence by forging alliances with other powers (Iran, Pakistan) to prevent Iraq from reaping the rewards of its victory. Seen in the context of Turkey's new role as the preserver of Middle Eastern stability, Ankara's use of the water issue may be an attempt to demonstrate that it has a hold over Iraq.

Contention over the Jordan

The River Jordan is the other basin over which there is considerable contention. Although much less impressive than the Euphrates in terms of water flow, it has much graver political implications. The Jordan, which originates in the highlands of Lebanon and Syria is used by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel, and all of these states are experiencing water shortages. The river now satisfies 75 per cent of Jordan's water needs, but its water demands are expected to increase by 50 per cent by the year 2005 and shortages will reach crisis proportions in the mid-1990s. Syria's water problems, also becoming acute, have led to resumption of the construction of the Wadda Dam, on the Syrian-Jordanian border. This joint project with Jordan will tap the river's last undeveloped tributary—the Yarmuk. But whether Israel will allow the project to proceed is an open question.

Israel is already using 95 per cent of its renewable water supplies, over half of it coming from the Jordan. Its continued agricultural expansion and domestic food production—part of its concept of "total defence"—will lead to a 30 per cent shortfall by the end of the century. Unless some agreement with other riparian states is reached, this water crisis could eventually lead to open conflict. Israeli officials constantly claim that water is their life and that they must therefore have complete control over its headwaters.

For Israel, the "hydraulic imperative" and the need to control its water resources has taken on an even greater importance than "secure borders". Indeed, in Israel's last electoral campaign, one of the Likud coalition's arguments for holding on to the occupied territories was that the West Bank and the Golan Heights provided Israel with 40 per cent of its fresh water. The price of withdrawal would be greater than that of continuing the occupation. Recently the Israeli authorities have been greatly concerned about a population explosion in the already densely populated Gaza Strip at the end of the century. This implies that Israel expects to hold on to these territories at least until then.



Israel's need for the Litani

Israel's ambitions, however, are not limited to the waters of the Golan and the West Bank; they also include Lebanon's. One of the multiple objectives of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was to control the waters of the Litani. American warnings to Israeli generals that the Litani constituted a "red line" went unheeded. Geological and topographic studies were begun in 1983, and by 1985 Israel had completed ducts aimed at diverting the waters of the Wazzani, one of Litani's tributaries, near the town of Marjayoun in South

Lebanon. There is increasing concern that Israel is merely waiting for the right political circumstances to implement these projects. Its water crisis is beginning in 1990 and water expenditure is expected to rise from its current level of 1,750 million cubic metres a year to 2,500 million a year by the year 2000. In the light of this and in view of its plans to absorb 900,000 Soviet Jews, Israel's occupation of part of south Lebanon is vital and its eventual annexation a likely objective.

Tel Aviv eyes the Nile
Israel also has ambitions concern-

ing the Nile. Having failed to secure Egyptian for diverting the waters of the Nile under the Camp David agreements, Israel has shifted its attention to Ethiopia. Israeli engineers have already begun preparations for building three dams located near the River Abay—one of the Nile's tributaries. These are part of a vast project aimed at improving agriculture and irrigation, but once they are completed they will enable Ethiopia to dictate the flow of the water to Egypt and Sudan. This is because 83-85 per cent of the waters of the Blue Nile flowing into Egypt originate in Ethiopia. Such a problem would threaten Egypt's national security and provide Egypt with a *casus belli* against Ethiopia. But Israel has other strategic interests in cooperating with the Ethiopian government, to prevent the Eritrean rebels from winning their fight for independence, a victory which might bring the Red Sea under effective Arab hegemony.

The need for Arab cooperation

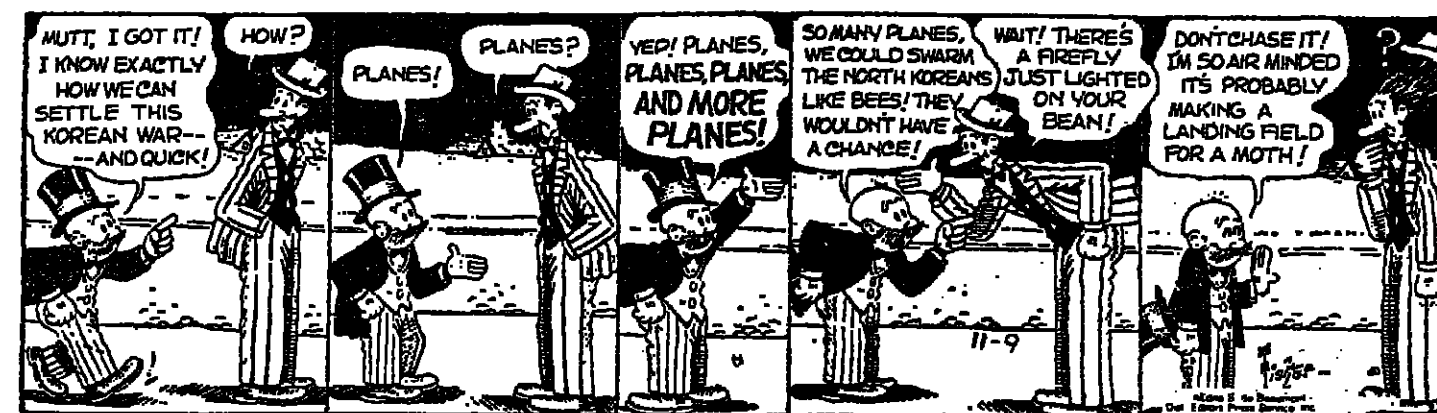
The exploitation of Arab waters—be they of the Euphrates, the Jordan, the Litani, or the Nile—renders it impossible to separate economics from politics. It is, therefore, imperative for the Arabs to work towards a unified strategy which will discourage separate agreements, put an end to inter-Arab conflicts, and encourage Arab reconciliation.

Because of the severe economic damage which water politics is liable to inflict on both Syria and Iraq, the time may have

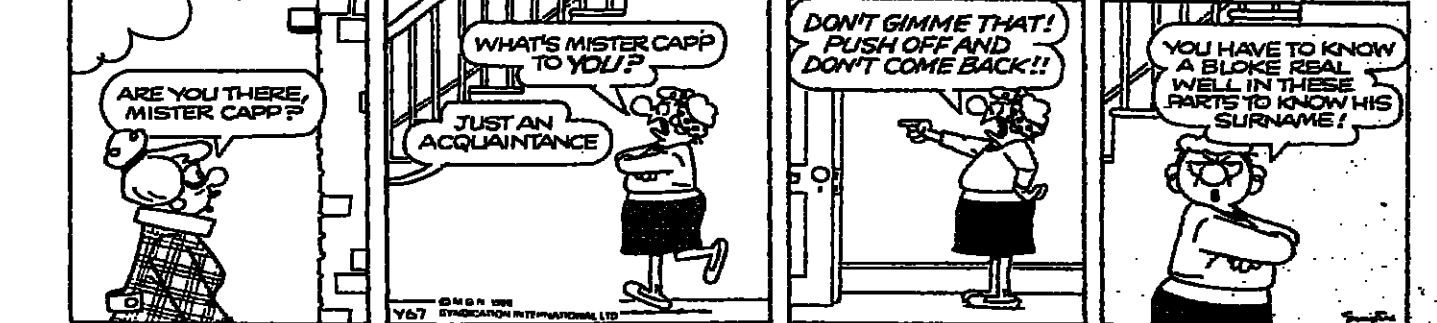
come for them to bury the hatchet and pursue some sort of peaceful, concerted effort to reach an agreement over an equitable water-sharing formula with Turkey. The signals from Damascus for negotiation and inter-Ba'athist reconciliation seem clear. Syrian officials have been claiming that the economic, political and security implications of the stemming of the flow of water to downstream countries need to be addressed jointly by the Arabs rather than by Iraq and Syria separately. An even stronger olive branch is Syria's decision to make up for Iraq's loss by using the waters of its own reservoir in Lake Assad. As for Iraq, Saddam Hussein's decision to send his oil minister, Mr Issam Al Jalabi, to Ankara to negotiate over the water issue is a reminder of the mutual stakes involved in maintaining good relations. Syria and Iraq seem to be on the road to opting for a peaceful initiative. This should, however, be accompanied by considerable Arab backing.

Arab reconciliation and cooperation is required on other fronts as well. In the 1950s, Ben Gurion's strategy was to sidestep the Arab World by cultivating ties with Turkey in the north, Iran in the east, and Ethiopia in the south. The fall of the shah in Iran and Turkey's opening to the Arabs have left Ethiopia the last pillar of this strategy. The onus is now on the Arab states to forge a unified front and work towards a comprehensive Arab strategy for the defence of Arab water—Middle East International, London.

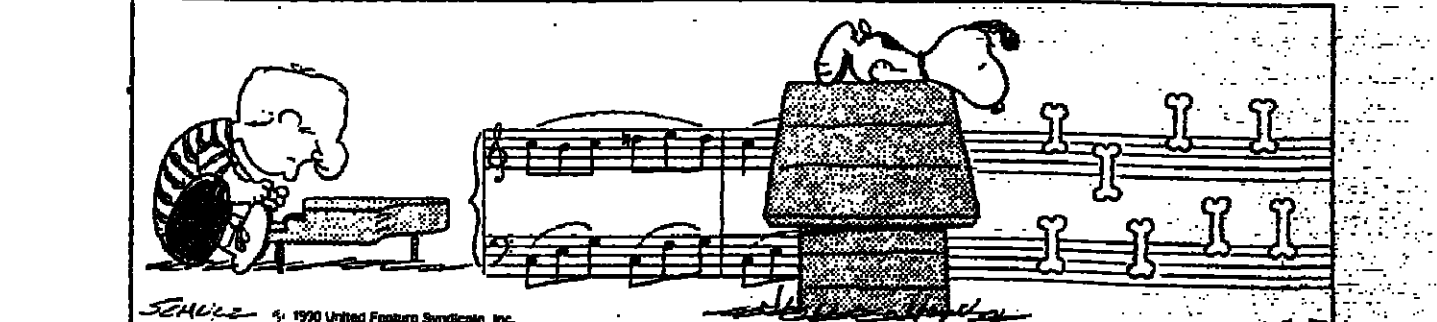
Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



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A vision of blindness—Israel and the intifada

Jane Taylor was born in Malacca, but from the age of nine grew up on a farm in West Sussex. Since 1971 her life has been divided between freelance television production, writing and photography around the world.

By Jane Taylor

FOR three days five-year-old Mohammad did not smile. He had been brought to the children's ward of St. John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem one Friday with a fine-burned cornea. Earlier that day, at home in Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, Israeli soldiers had ordered a group of teenagers to whitewash over some pro-PLC graffiti. When a handful of smaller boys started throwing stones, a soldier hurled the can of whitewash, catching Mohammad full in the face.

A nurse came to change his dressing and showed me the opaque milky film covering the whole iris.

On the fourth day Mohammad ventured a smile, and from then on this eye-patched activist recovered his natural effervescence. When we discovered a swing on an outing to the hospital garden, you would have thought paradise had come to earth—there are few swings in Jabaliya.

For Chris Balouris, an American doctor working at St. John's for a year, Mohammad's treatment posed a problem. In North America or Europe a corneal graft would be done after a year or so when the eye had settled, and with good hygiene and regular checks there would be every chance of full recovery.

Here in Jerusalem, by contrast, there is a serious shortage of corneas for grafting—for the Arab population. Consignments (mainly from the U.K. and USA) are erratic and infrequent, and are under recurrent threat of having an import-tax imposed. There is always a waiting-list. Even if Mohammad were lucky, Jabaliya is scarcely the best environment for recovery—access is difficult, conditions dusty and dirty, monitoring limited; and if there were rejection of the new cornea, getting him back to Jerusalem for treatment could present problems. The movement of Gaza Arabs become more troubled almost daily, and it is already common for ambulances carrying Arabs in need of urgent medical attention to be delayed until the condition is past treatment.

Rather than run the risk of a worse infection, said Dr. Balouris, it might be preferable to let this little Gaza boy blind in one eye. Such agonising decisions have become normal for those who work for the health of the Arab population in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

St. John Ophthalmic Hospital is known to the Arabs whom it serves simply as *Mastashia Al Ayoun*, the eye hospital. There is no other. I had gone there to see something of its work, in particular as it has been affected by the intifada.

It is a remarkable institution, founded in 1882 when Britain was at the height of its wealth and empire. The new, and grandly named "Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem" looked back to its crusader namesake whose famous hospital and church in 12th century Jerusalem had care for poor and sick pilgrims. Disturbed that Russia, France, Austria and Germany all had charitable institutions in the Holy Land while the then richest nation on earth did not, and seeing that eye disease was a major medical problem in the Middle East, with little provision for its treatment, they decided to found an ophthalmic hospital.

One hundred years later eye disease is still a major problem—congenital glaucoma and diabetes are common and can cause total or partial loss of vision; and although trachoma has been all but eradicated amongst young Palestinians by a campaign run by St. John's in the early '80s, the scarring of the cornea that often results from it years later is still a major cause of blindness among the many older people who had trachoma before then. Cataracts too are common—so easily dealt with given adequate monitoring and treatment facilities, and funds; but for most Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza these facilities and funds are severely limited.

Huge advances in recent years in drugs, equipment and techniques have made ophthalmic treatment quicker and better. They have also made the bills bigger. For any hospital like St. John's this is a threat to survival. There were, indeed, moments when closure seemed inevitable; but now, with the support of Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, a major international effort is underway to create an endowment fund to cover the costs of this unique hospital in perpetuity.

These costs include running an 80-bed hospital and treating 50,000 patients per year, of which about 5,000 have major surgery and in-patient treatment. There is also an active outreach programme, with a team from St. John's visiting villages and refugee camps in the West Bank twice a week—vital for detecting potentially blinding conditions at an early stage—and the Gaza Strip once a week.

International nature

Today St. John's is a minor United Nations. Still British-owned, both the matron and the warden-chief surgeon are British, and some of the doctors and nursing sisters; but there is also a regular turn-over of other Europeans, Americans, Canadians and Australians. The majority of doctors, however, including the deputy warden, are Palestinians. Highly qualified (most trained in Europe or the United States) they are increasingly the mainstay of the hospital, for while most of the foreigners stay only for a year, for the Palestinians it is home, and it is their own people they are serving. The same is true of the nurses.

From 7.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. the out-patients clinic teems with all ages and conditions of people—grandmothers, their white hair turned orange with henna, wearing long, finely embroidered dresses; younger women, in off-the-peg dresses, gaudily machine-embroidered, carrying a baby or leading a child, or both; robbed old men, white-bearded like patriarchs, with white keffiyehs on their heads; younger men and children in universal Western clothes. Many wear eye-patches, many tenderly help others to find where they must go. In this crowded kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is not so much king as guide and comforter.

Such gentle sanity pervades the hospital; yet the escalating insanity of the world outside is all too visible in the injuries of many of the patients, for the intifada has created a new genre of eye problem. In the first two years 227 people were treated at St. John Ophthalmic Hospital for eye injuries directly related to the uprising. Of these, 70 lost the sight of one eye, 27 having to have the eye removed, 83 injuries were caused by soldiers beating people over the head; 43 by what the Israeli army calls "harmless" rubber or plastic bullets; five by live bullets; and two from lime-burn—the first was four-year-old, five-year-old Mohammad was the second. In January 1990 a third lime-burn victim was brought in, aged three.

'Harmless' bullets

There has also been a marked increase in the number of traumatic cataracts and squints. I saw a languidly smiling baby who had been brought in with a bad squint. The British orthoptist, Judith Musallam, did all the usual tests and Yasmin smiled, but scarcely moved. At 20 months she could not walk or stand, or even sit upright without support. Her story was quietly told: when she was two months old there was a clash—just one of many—between a group of children and some Israeli soldiers. The soldiers tear-gassed the whole village, aiming several grenades into houses (clearly stated as highly dangerous in the American manufacturers' instructions). The older children in the family all vomited, and for two weeks was in a coma in Mokas-Hospital in Jerusalem. Though she has grown since then, her muscles remain limp. The squint was part of this, merely a minor effect of the tear-gas.

While Yasmin was still in Judith Musallam's consulting room, Michael Griffiths, a British army doctor on secondment for one year, came in and put an X-ray on the light box to examine it. In the middle of the left eye socket was a circular space, about one centimetre in diameter—one of the so-called rubber bullets, in fact a metal ball with a thin coating of rubber, at 30 grammes much heavier than regular bullets.

"She's in the clinic now if you would like to see her," Arabiya, a pretty and lively student nurse, was chatting and laughing with a nurse as she awaited Dr. Griffiths' return. One day, about two months earlier, she had been walking down the street of her home town, Ramallah, on her way to college



Five-year-old Mohammad from Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The day before this photo was taken an Israeli soldier had thrown a can of whitewash over him, resulting in a lime-burned cornea. With a shortage of corneas for grafting (for the Arab population) it is uncertain whether Mohammad will ever see again out of his right eye (Photo by Jane Taylor)

in Jerusalem. It was around 11 in the morning and all was quiet. Suddenly she felt a searing pain in her left eye, and putting her hand up, found blood running down her face. At first she thought it was a stone but, as soon as she became aware, it was one of the "harmless" army bullets. The eye had to be removed. She was in the clinic now for a check-up, and to make an appointment to have an artificial eye fitted.

"Will you continue your nursing training?" I asked. She laughed. "Heavens, they won't stop me so easily! Only if they get the other eye too."

Don't expect a de luxe struggle. An Israeli army spokesman advised me.

"No, I don't think I was expecting the de luxe."

When so many basic provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention have been disregarded there seems little chance of the de luxe. Even if we limit our vision to the medical field—when Arab ambulances carrying critically injured people are delayed on their way to hospital; when doctors are prevented from seeing injured Arab patients; when licences are withheld from Arab ambulance drivers; when these ambulance drivers are beaten up or shot while helping the wounded; when Arab hospitals are violently raided by the army; when vital organs—including eyes—go missing without permission of the families from the bodies of Arabs who have died in Israeli hospitals—no, I was not expecting the de luxe.

"We are working with the Red Cross on the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention," the spokesman assured me. He did not add that the Red Cross does not see eye to eye with the Israeli government on the implementation of the Convention; nor did he mention their castigation of "practices which violate the fundamental principles of humanitarian law"—a break from their normal impartiality.

I had gone to the spokesman to ask what the army's guidelines were on the use of bullets against stone-throwers.

"You have to realise that this is a situation of the greatest complexity. There are many things that are difficult to explain. In a normal war the more people killed the better, but in this war the more killed the worse it is."

"Can you call it a war when one side has only stones?" He was indignant: "And molotov cocktails."

"All right, stones and molotov cocktails. That still doesn't add up to guns and tear-gas. And many of your opponents are children. To the world outside it could seem more like repression than war."

"The world is often wrong. The Israeli army is certainly in a dilemma with children; this is a completely new phenomenon. It is even hard to explain why soldiers are fighting civilians—it is part of the global development of the Israeli-Arab conflict."

Global development? I had only asked about bullets.

"You still have not answered my question—what are the army's rules on the use of bullets against stone-throwers?"

"The Israeli army is responsible for keeping order until a political solution is found. It has to do what it can within the framework of law to keep order. It is killed it is bad for us; and it's another reason for the Arabs to continue the intifada. We are categorically against violence."

'Mistakes'

I made a last attempt to escape this Alice through the Looking Glass world.

"Please would you tell me if there are any rules at all on the use of bullets against people armed with stones? I'm getting the impression that there are none, that it is left to the indi-

vidual to decide when to shoot."

We set off at 6 a.m. and were waved through the Gaza checkpoint by a beaming, burly soldier. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief—it is not always so easy and quick. The last part of the journey was along the kind of coast that dreams and films are made of—white beach, aquamarine sea with rolling waves, and here and there a cluster of beach huts, with chic houses, a tennis court, swimming pool and riding stables nearby. The 'Hawaii of Israel,' it is called—though this is Gaza, not Israel—for it has been acquired for the use of a handful of Israeli settlers, while 700,000 Gazans live in crowded poverty nearby.

Then we entered Rafah, a squalid town grown more squalid with battering and neglect. All the shops were open as there was no strike, and the streets were full of cheerful bustle. As we neared the clinic we saw a handful of Israeli soldiers moving in. Within half an hour all the shops were shuttered and barred, by which time we were inside the clinic and the first operation was underway. The shooting began about half an hour later again.

A few of us stood by an open window of the first floor at the side of the building, with a partial view of the street, listening to the sound of gunfire that was only just out of sight. Suddenly the shouting became louder.

"Someone has been hit," said Saleh, the St. John's driver and universal fixer. "Certainly wounded, maybe killed, I don't know."

Then our eyes started smarting

and there was whiff of tear-gas, so we closed the window for a while and just listened. When we opened it again a few people were standing in doorways, looking in the direction of gunfire. A few soldiers rushed by, swivelling guns in front of them, and the occasional jeep or armoured car drove down the street, enclosed by stout metal grilles against stones.

Suddenly there was shooting just outside the clinic, then men shouting and women screaming. Saleh came running to our window from one at the front where he had seen a young man being shot and taken into the house immediately opposite our window. Blue folding metal doors were hurriedly opened and an aged car was driven out with a figure slumped in the back.

"His family are taking him to hospital; but I am sure he is dead," said Saleh. "His brother was killed last week."

Half an hour later the shooting stopped. In the 1½ hours it had lasted Dr. de Cock had done two more operations, quietly disregarding the insanity in the streets. Another operation was performed in an eerie post-gunfire silence.

All four cataract patients that morning were women, and all came merrily out of the theatre with a patch over one eye, a smile and a joke, only lying down against because they were told to, otherwise they would have walked straight home. I asked one how she had felt having her eye operated on while she was still conscious, and with gunfire all around.

"Normal," she said with a nonchalant shrug.

"Quiet day," said one of the old men who had been sitting in the clinic.

As we drove back to Jerusalem it was announced on the Hebrew news that a young man of 20 had been killed in Rafah, adding that he had been shot in the back. Three days later the Jerusalem Post reported the death of a 13-year-old Rafah boy, wounded in a clash with troops on Saturday—the one for whom we had heard the first outbreak of shouting that morning.

A quiet day, all quiet normal, not much different from the day before or the day after; for in Gaza and the West Bank the unspeakable has become the unquiet and disquieting normality.

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Iraq wins Arab basketball tourney

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Rashid Club of Iraq was crowned Thursday as the champion of the Arab Basketball Championship which was held in Amman between May 2 and May 10. Though defeated by the Saudi club Al Ittihad in its final match, Al Rashid maintained the top spot in overall standings.

The second place was won by Al Ahli club of Egypt which defeated the Syrian club Al Ittihad 84-83 in the final match of the championship, keeping the Syrian club in the third place.

The fourth place went to Al Ortoodox club, the host, after Kathima of Kuwait withdrew from the championship, thus leading the championship's technical committee to cancel all its results.

In ladies competition Al Mal'ab club of Tunisia was the first place, followed by Algerian club Hussein Dal and in the third place was Al Thawra of Syria. Jordan's two entries in the championship, Al Ortoodox and Al Ahli, occupied the fifth and the sixth places respectively. Photo above shows scenes from a match that took place between Al Rashid and Kathima Wednesday.

Mexico beats U.S.

BURNABY, Canada (AP) — Luis Flores scored in the 10th minute as Mexico beat the United States 1-0 Thursday night in the 3-nations cup soccer tournament.

Flores redirected a shot by Victor Medina from just inside the 18-yard box that barely eluded Tony Meola goalkeeper of the World Cup-bound U.S. team at 9:30.

Meola was flawless the last 80 minutes to keep the Americans within striking distance. The stocky 20-year-old made 10 saves — many spectacular — compared with one by Mexico goalkeeper Hugo Pinera.

The loss dropped the U.S. to 0-2 in the three-country, round-robin tournament that ends Sunday when the Canadian national team plays Mexico.

Canada beat the Americans 1-0 last Sunday in the opening game of the inaugural series for the Corona Cup. The 1991 event will be in Los Angeles.

The Mexicans controlled the tempo of Thursday's game with their accurate passing. The Americans had few offensive builds through midfield.

The U.S. team featured several players not likely to play in the World Cup next month. Most of the east coasters were on the east coast for another series of exhibition games.

The first half was a rough affair at times that produced three official cautions from referee Dave Brummitt and the disqualification of American forward Eric Eichmann.

Eichmann was ejected in the 44th minute after his boots-up tackle from behind on Mexican forward Sergio Lira.

Brummitt issued yellow-card cautions to U.S. defender Alexi Lalas, Eichmann and Mexican midfielder Javier Aguirre before booking Eichmann with a red card, forcing the U.S. to play short-handed the last 46 minutes.

The Americans lost talented sweeper Robin Fraser in the second minute with an ankle injury. He was replaced by Kevin Grimes.

U.S. coach John Kowalski made four changes after the earlier loss to Canada, inserting Meola, Lalas, midfielder Hendrick Gutierrez and forward Jeff Betts into the starting lineup.

The Mexicans returned to international competition earlier this year after a two-year suspension was imposed by FIFA, the world governing body, for using ineligible players. The suspension cost Mexico an opportunity to qualify for this year's World Cup in Italy after they finished sixth at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico.

Brazil boasts soccer squad

TERESOPOLIS, Brazil (AP) — Coach Sebastiao Lazaroni of the national soccer team rejected criticism Thursday that his team is too defensive and said Brazil will have one of its strongest squads ever in the World Cup this summer.

"The history of the World Cup shows there are cycles," Lazaroni said. "Some are mostly technique. Others mainly strength. Some are rotation. The current moment is one of competitiveness. If you don't have skill, strength and mobility, you are left behind."

Lazaroni spoke to reporters during a break in the team's final week of training camp in this mountain resort city near Rio.

Brazil plays East Germany in an exhibition game Sunday and leaves Wednesday for Europe.

The coach refused criticism that his team is too timid on offense, but admitted Brazil would use only two attackers instead of the traditional three.

"I'm only taking five defence-men and I've been criticised for that. Some teams are taking eight," he said.

"The important thing is balance between the attack and defence, and that's what we're trying for," Lazaroni added.

Asked about a comment by former star midfielder Socrates that the team lacks a field general, Lazaroni said, "Brazil has changed from the days when Socrates, Didi, or Zico commanded the offence. Now the team is the star, not any individual player."

Asked to list his favourites to win the cup, Lazaroni said, "Brazil, Brazil, Brazil. Then Italy, West Germany, the Netherlands, and the Soviet Union."

Injured attacker Romario will join the team in Spain on May 17th, and will have one week to prove he has recovered from a broken leg, Lazaroni said.

"I expect to have him back," the coach said. "He has no pain and no atrophy, and he said he feels good and optimistic. But if he's not in condition by the 25th another player will be called up."

Lazaroni also said he was prepared to face the traditional hostility of fans if Brazil doesn't win the cup.

"Winning or losing a World Cup is the limit of passion and pain, and like all Latin's we sometimes go to far," he said.

"Anyway," he added with a smile, "I already have a swat (special police) team at the house."

Navratilova downs Cecchini

ROME (Agencies) — Top-seeded Martina Navratilova, the oldest player in the tournament, survived another three-set struggle Thursday to join Jennifer Capriati and the rest of the teen brigade in the quarterfinals of the Italian Open.

Still showing the effects of a pulled hamstring, the 33-year-old Navratilova picked up her serve-and-volley game and came from behind in the third set to down Italy's Sandra Cecchini 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

Capriati, the 14-year-old American, also was taken to three sets by an Italian but settled down to post a 6-3, 6-7 (10-8), 6-2 victory over Laura Golarsa and run her pro record to 16-3.

The no. 2 seed, 16-year-old Monica Seles, breezed to a 6-1, 6-1 victory over Mercedes Paz. And 19-year-old defending champion Gabriela Sabatini, the fourth seed, crushed Regina Rajchrtova 6-0, 6-1.

In the tournament's first major upset, third-seeded Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario was eliminated in the third round by Canada's Helen Kelesi, 6-4, 7-5.

Others reaching the quarterfinals were no. 5 Manuela Maleeva and no. 13 Caterina Lindqvist.

Sixth-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain also qualified for the quarterfinals with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over no. 16 seed Cathy Caverzasio.

Navratilova, who was extended to three sets Wednesday by Australian Rachel McQuillan, found herself in trouble again against Cecchini.

Playing in front of her home fans on the Foro Italico eccentre court, the 14th-seeded Italian captured the second set by changing the rhythm with slices and drop shots.

Cecchini broke Navratilova in the first game of the third set and held serve for a 2-0 lead. But the American left-hander cut down on her mistakes, took control of the net and lost only eight more points the rest of the way.

Navratilova, who wore a bandage around her left thigh, said the hamstring injury bothered her on some points.

"I can't say that I was at 100 per cent," she said. "I couldn't get down on some volleys and low balls. But it's better than yesterday so I'm encouraged."

Capriati, the 12th seed in her fourth pro tournament, also faced her toughest challenge so far this week.

After winning the first set handily, Capriati had trouble coping with Golarsa's defensive, off-speed shots and surprise

dashes to the net. Robbed of the pace which helps her hard-hitting game, Capriati began making unforced errors from the baseline.

In the second-set tiebreak, Capriati had a match point at 8-7 but sailed a forehand long. Two points later, Golarsa closed out the tiebreak with a perfectly-placed drop shot.

Golarsa broke for a 1-0 lead in the final set, but Capriati won six of the next seven games and ended the match with a forehand serve return that clipped the net and fell over for a winner.

"I was feeling tired at the end of the second set but after the first game of the third set I regrouped," Capriati said. "She was hitting short and low and I decided to attack more."

Sanchez-Vicario said the fatigue was a factor in her loss to Kelesi, the 11th seed.

"After seven tournaments this year, I'm tired," said last year's French Open champion. "I gave it everything I had today. I attacked on the important points. But my shots kept going long. I guess it just wasn't my day."

Kelesi, who reached the Rome finals in 1988, trailed 2-4 in both sets. She and Sanchez both play similar baseline-hugging, topspin games, but it was the Canadian, hustling all over the court and shouting "yeah" after her winners, who made the least mistakes.

"After I fell behind 4-2 in the first set, I just told myself to relax, and to start getting ready for the second," said Kelesi. "And I started playing better."

"I really needed this win today," the 20-year-old Canadian said. "I'd played Arantxa twice this year and lost both times. I knew that if I lost today, it would be a long time before I beat her again."

John McEnroe has withdrawn from the Italian Open men's tennis championships because of injury, foregoing a chance to win the title for the first time.

The organisers of the tournament, which starts Monday, said Thursday that the American had dropped out because he had not recovered from an injury sustained recently.

A spokeswoman for the organisers said they had no further details about McEnroe's reasons for withdrawing.

It is the third tournament in a row that he (McEnroe) has dropped out of without the reasons ever being clear," she said. "He withdrew from Nice and Monaco."

The withdrawal of McEnroe, ranked 10th in the world, weakens further an entry already lacking the world's top four, Ivan Lendl, Boris Becker, Stefan Edberg and Andre Agassi.

McEnroe last took part in the Italian Open in 1987 and was a favourite with the crowds. He reached the semifinals where he was beaten 6-1, 6-3 by Swede Mats Wilander, who went on to

win the tournament.

The organisers said another American, Pete Sampras, had also withdrawn after being injured at the West German Open in Hamburg this week.

Navratilova said Wednesday she saw no reason to stop playing tennis while she remains among the best in the world — even though she is nearly a generation older than most of her leading rivals.

"I believe that if you enjoy it and do it for the right reasons, there's no reason not to go on playing," the 33-year-old American, eight times Wimbledon champion said.

"I'm a clear (world) number two and have every chance to win a grand slam tournament. I'd be crazy to quit," she said after winning her second round match at the Italian Open championship where she is top seed.

Argentine Gabriela Sabatini, who turns 20 next week, said she did not think she would still be playing on the professional circuit in 10 years time.

Sabatini, the holder and fourth seed who is already talking of wanting to enjoy life outside tennis, is herself a few years older than many of the other seeds at the Rome tournament.

The second seed is 16-year-old Monica Seles of Yugoslavia, while 14-year-old Capriati of the United States, a professional only since March, is seeded 12th.

"Only Chris (Evans) and I have played this long," Navratilova said. Chris Evans, her archrival for so many years, retired last year at the age of 34.

"I remember when I was in my early twenties and saw Billie Jean (King) playing, if someone had asked me if I was going to play that long I would have said 'no way'."

Navratilova has her sights set on a record ninth Wimbledon crown and said an important part of her preparation was rest.

"I don't need any extra practice on grass before Wimbledon. I simply need a little rest."

She said she was not playing the French Open because it left her only three days rest before the Eastbourne tournament and Wimbledon.

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Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 1065 ♠ KJ1043 ♠ 762 ♠ 95
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 ♠
What action do you take?
A.—You do not have much, but you should compete with two hearts. You have a good five-card major and there is no guarantee, if you don't bid, that partner's hand is suitable for further action. And if the opponents declare at least you will have steered partner to the best lead.

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ KQ72 ♠ 9652 ♠ Void ♠ 8763
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 ♠
What action do you take?
A.—You certainly intend competing, but there's no hurry about raising clubs. Bid two spades. First, that might be your best contract if partner has a fit. Secondly, it will make the defense easier if partner knows where your values are.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 4 ♠ AK1052 ♠ KJ76 ♠ AJ9
The bidding has proceeded:
East South West North
1 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 ♠
What action do you take?
A.—You have a three-suited hand suitable for play in any strain except spades. There is a textbook method to show this hand and we can see no reason to consider anything else. Double for takeout.

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 965 ♠ AK8 ♠ QJ93 ♠ Q52
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 1 ♠ 1 ♠ 1 ♠
What do you bid now?
A.—Your diamond honors behind the bid make your hand worth more than its 12 points in high cards. There is only one game you are interested in, so don't waste time. Bid three no trump.

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ Q652 ♠ 9852 ♠ 7 ♠ J943
Partner opens the bidding with a demand bid of two hearts. What do you respond?
A.—You do not have the values for a positive response of three hearts and possession of a singleton heart from the weak, fit-showing jump to four hearts. So you must first make a negative response of two no trump.

Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ Q652 ♠ 9852 ♠ 7 ♠ J943
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
2 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 NT 2 ♠
What do you bid now?
A.—You have promised nothing and you hold four-card support, a singleton and a queen which might be working. Since four hearts would be an underbid, one-bid four diamonds. Partner should treat that as a real suit, but when you next raise hearts he should get the message that you have more than a minimum in support of his suit and a diamond control.

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Cheney predicts fewer nuclear weapons ahead

WASHINGTON (AP) — NATO nations will have fewer nuclear weapons as a result of an alliance strategy review, U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney predicts.

Cheney, speaking with reporters after a two-day NATO meeting in Canada, also left the door open for a unilateral withdrawal of aged nuclear artillery shells from Western Europe.

"It's entirely possible," Cheney said. "It wouldn't be the first time it's been done."

The defence secretary said the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) clearly is in the mood to pare its nuclear arsenal in light of the near-elimination of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe and East-West agreements to slash conventional forces.

Given those developments, "you can also take down nuclear forces," Cheney told reporters aboard his plane returning to Washington.

"We want to go to the lowest level (of nuclear weapons) we can... we don't want any more nuclear weapons than necessary," he said.

The meeting was the first alliance discussion of nuclear issues after President George Bush announced he had dropped plans to upgrade short-range nuclear missile systems and was scrapping a move to modernise nuclear artillery.

At the conference, Dutch and West German officials pressed for speedy, unilateral elimination of the 1,600 nuclear-tipped artillery shells. The weapons are designed to be used within a 16 to 32-kilometre range to halt an overwhelming advance of Warsaw Pact troops.

Britain expressed reservations and called for holding onto some short-range, land-based nuclear weapons.

But the United States did not object to the Dutch and German proposal, which was supported by other ministers, leaving it for further study under a lengthy review of NATO nuclear strategy.

Cheney said the comprehensive review of NATO's nuclear force structure wouldn't be anywhere near completed by the time alliance leaders gather for a summit in London on July 5-6.

He said the review "is going to take a long time" but believed it "would result in an overall reduction in nuclear weapons."

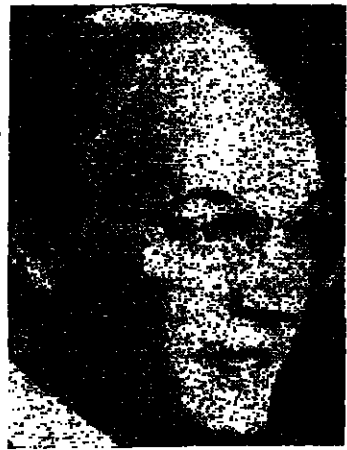
"We're likely to see fewer nuclear weapons in Europe than in the past," he said.

Cheney appeared upbeat about the results of his third NATO nuclear planning group session, which was held at the snowy Kananaskis ski resort at the foot of the Canadian Rockies.

Fourteen of the alliance's 16 defence ministers — including an observer from Iceland — ended the session with a statement that there is a "diminishing need" for short-range nuclear systems in the alliance arsenal because of the changing security situation in Europe.

The ministers left to a future series of NATO sessions decisions on what kind of cuts might be made in those short-range nuclear systems.

Cheney stressed that some U.S. nuclear weapons must re-



Dick Cheney main in Europe as a fundamental deterrent and as a means of avoiding war.

Conventional forces alone won't prevent an outbreak of war, he argued.

He described as "very, very shaky thinking" the view that Europe can rid itself of nuclear weapons when NATO and the Warsaw Pact reach parity in conventional forces.

"Everybody wants to operate as though the future is here today," he said, repeating his oft-stated warning that although changes in Soviet military posture in Europe have begun, they are by no means complete.

The short-range forces under discussion have come to prominence in light of the U.S.-Soviet treaty eliminating intermediate-range nuclear missiles, which had a range of more than 480 kilometres.

The alliance, in its statement, acknowledged that the decision to cut back on shorter-range weapons places more emphasis on air-launched nuclear missiles, which also must be upgraded in the coming decade.

De Klerk arrives in Greece

ATHENS (R) — President F.W. De Klerk Friday became the first South African leader to visit Greece and met Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis on the second leg of an 18-day European tour to explain his political reforms.

De Klerk was greeted at Athens airport by Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras, who took him to the office of President Constantine Karamanlis and on to see Mitsotakis.

The Greek Left Party said in a statement Mitsotakis was wrong to receive De Klerk and Foreign Minister Pik Botha "since the two men have been linked to the most cruel moments of apartheid."

It urged opponents of apartheid to gather in central Athens in the evening for a rally to oppose De Klerk's visit.

De Klerk said after meeting French President Francois Mitterrand in Paris Thursday that it was time for the European Community (EC) to reassess its anti-apartheid sanctions.

He was due to take the same message to eight other EC countries and Switzerland during a tour which erodes South Africa's long political isolation from the West.

A South African government source said Pretoria hoped to get a sympathetic hearing from the new conservative government of Greece, which last month ended eight years of Socialist rule and one year of weak coalitions.

Greece could play a pivotal role if there was a move at next month's EC summit to review sanctions against Pretoria.

The Community is divided over how to react to De Klerk's initiatives, with Britain alone deciding to ease some restrictions against Pretoria.

Greece has backed the EC majority's demand for clear evidence of irreversible change as a condition for easing sanctions, but South Africa believes it could swing if France or West Germany was to back Britain.

The source said De Klerk wanted personally to explain his plans to reform 40-year-old apartheid laws segregating South Africa's blacks and whites and to bring the nation's voteless black majority into government for the first time in 350 years.

Echoing De Klerk's message to Mitterrand in stronger terms, the source said Pretoria believed it had already given evidence of its commitment to ending apartheid and it was time for Europe to respond with a positive gesture.

"There is no way that this government can go back. The only way the changes will not be irreversible is if the right or the left takes over in South Africa," the source said.

Greek officials were cautious about the outcome of De Klerk's visit, the first by a leader of the white minority government in South Africa, which has a 100,000-strong Greek community.

"We expect very little from the visit. Our trade relations are close to nil as a result of European Community sanctions," said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zografou.

Canadian diplomats said Botha, South Africa's foreign minister for the past 13 years, would meet visiting Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark in Athens Sunday.

German army transport plane crashes; 5 killed

WUERZBURG, West Germany (AP) — A West German army transport plane crashed near the southern city of Wuertzburg Friday and burst into flames, killing at least five of 10 people on board, officials said.

Defence Ministry officials said the plane went down in a remote, wooded area near Wuertzburg, which is about 120 kilometres south of Frankfurt.

The plane was loaded with kerosene and burst into flames when it hit, police said.

A witness reported seeing the airplane flying low over the area just before the crash, according to police.

The witness heard the plane crash at about 9:20 a.m. (0720 GMT), said police.

Recovery teams found the bodies of five passengers, said the Wuertzburg police department.

"We expect that the five others also did not survive the crash," said a police official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

'Near-miss' reported

On Thursday, a British airliner nearly collided with two U.S. Air Force jets, and two passengers were injured when the plane's pilot made a nose dive to avoid a crash, authorities said.

The Dan-Air British turboprop was on a flight from West Berlin to Saarbruecken, near the French border, and was carrying 15 passengers, including a child, and a crew of six.

A statement by the Rhineland-Palatinate State Interior Ministry said two passengers required hospital treatment for contusions.

21 killed in Mexican plane crash

TUXTLA GUTIERREZ, Mexico (R) — A twin-engine computer plane crashed and burned in a field outside this Mexican City Thursday, killing at least 21 people, including a Mexican bishop flying in for Pope John Paul II's visit.

The flight departed from the city of Tapachula near the Guatemalan border Tuxtla Gutierrez, about 600 kilometres southeast of Mexico City.

Tuxtla's bishop, Monsignor Felipe Aguirre Franco, told reporters that Bishop Luis Miguel Canton Marin, 49, of Tapachula, as well as two other priests died in the crash.

Rescue workers said the bishop's cross and bible were among personal belongings pulled from the fire-gutted fuselage.

Pope John Paul II was due to arrive Friday for a brief visit and say a n-ss before departing for the nearby city of Villahermosa.

Five survivors walked away with only minor injuries, according to Chiapas state government spokesman Eladi Castro. At least seven were listed in critical condition in hospital.

Survivor Luis Calderon, 43, told Reuters, "I am very Catholic and I prayed a lot but I don't consider this a miracle. I feel it's just part of my life."

Calderon, who was almost untouched in the crash, said he pulled three children from the burning fuselage after the crash. Rescue officials said at least two other children died.

A Vatican spokesman travelling with the Pope in Monterrey said the Pontiff was saddened to hear of the tragedy and would change his schedule to bless the bodies at a special ceremony during his brief visit.

"The Pope wants to pray for the victims and console their families," said spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

The crash occurred Thursday morning in a barren sorghum field about 4.5 kilometres from the local airport, which sits atop a mountain.

Miguel Angel Guadarrama, director-general of Aviaca, said the cause of the crash was under investigation but insisted that the 23-year-old Dutch-built Fokker Turboprop had been in good condition.

Calderon said the plane's right engine had shut down as it attempted to land. He said the pilot attempted to pull the plane back up and circle for another approach but lacked enough power.

At his homily later in Monterrey Thursday, the Pope asked people attending mass in a dried riverbed to join him in praying for those killed and injured in the crash.

"We ask God to concede eternal rest to the dead and a quick recovery to the injured," he said.

Nepali Communist leader says king undermining new government

KATHMANDU (R) — Nepal's leading Communist said Friday that King Birendra was trying to undermine the new interim government and called for an investigation into the "ill-gotten" wealth of monarchists.

"Every effort is being made by the palace to discredit and undermine this government," Manmohan Adhikari, general secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal, said in an interview.

"The aim is not to allow this government to function," he said, adding that army, police and top bureaucrats were not cooperating with Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai's administration.

The government Thursday lifted a dusk-to-dawn curfew imposed on Kathmandu after anti-communist riots 17 days ago, in which eight officers were beaten to death by mobs accusing them of being monarchists.

Bhattarai, who came to power after massive pro-democracy demonstrations in Kathmandu last month, heads a coalition of the liberal Nepali Congress Party and a United Left Front led by the Communist Party of Nepal.

"The King is instigating experienced bureaucrats to create problems for this government," said Adhikari, who has spent 15 of the past 30 years in jail.

"They keep things secret from the ministers. They come to the office but they don't tell you anything," he said.

But the government would not be toppled easily as it had the support of the people, he said.

Adhikari said the United Left Front had agreed to the idea of a constitutional monarchy and its main demand was to investigate the money made by palace loyalists.

"The ill-gotten wealth amassed in the last 30 years must be investigated. Everybody knows how much wealth they have. It can be checked," he said.

"But the palace is interfering because the king's brother, wife, relatives and secretaries will be exposed," Adhikari said.

He said his party did not want to put too much pressure on the government on this issue because "we want this government to succeed."

Communists have joined the government for the first time in Nepal's history.

The party was banned in 1960

when King Mahendra, Birendra's father, dismissed parliament and the popularly elected Congress Party government.

He abolished the multiparty system and introduced the party-less Panchayat (council) system.

Birendra scrapped the party-less system last month in the face of the demonstrations. Scores were killed when security forces fired on protesters marching to the palace.

The king swore in an interim government, restored the multiparty system and promised free elections within a year.

Within weeks the Communist Party opened its first legal office in 30 years and its members began to operate openly.

Adhikari said his party, which had launched the struggle for democracy along with Nepali Congress, would fight the next elections as its coalition partner.

"This alliance is the outcome of our experience over the last 30 years. In the past there was no unity even among Communists and the advantage always went to the king," he said.

"If we go into the election divided, we will be defeated," Adhikari added.

COLUMN 8

Car company apologises for Graf lookalike

BONN (R) — The head of the Opel car company publicly apologised to West German tennis star Steffi Graf Friday and promised to withdraw an advertisement featuring a scantily-clad Graf lookalike surrounded by half-naked men.

"Dear Steffi, I am disappointed that no one from the responsible department or the ad agency got your permission for this advertisement," wrote Louis Hughes, management board chairman of Opel, the West German unit of General Motors Inc.

"I will personally assure you that it will never happen again," the Bild newspaper quoted Hughes as telling the world's number one woman player by letter. He said the advertisement would be stopped as quickly as possible.

The advertisements featuring model Debbie Dickinson, who bears a remarkable resemblance to Graf, caused a sensation when they appeared in newspapers across West Germany.

Graf issued a statement denying she was the woman reclining in an open-top Opel Corsa surrounded by half-dressed men.

Lack of nice men keeps Japanese women unmarried

TOKYO (R) — Most single Japanese women think the main reason they have not yet tied the knot is a scarcity of "nice men," a survey published Friday showed.

The survey of 500 women conducted by the Allmann Institute, a Tokyo-based matchmaking agency, found that four out of five did not think they had even seen any nice men recently.

The survey showed a "nice man" was one who was good-looking, intelligent, talkative, honest and highly paid.

Gabor files complaint against 'biased' judge

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actress Zsa Zsa Gabor has filed a complaint against a Beverly Hills judge who ordered her to serve another 60 hours of community service for breach of probation in her police slapping case, her publicist said Thursday.

Phil Palodino said Gabor had written to the California Committee on Judicial Performance and the California Bar Association complaining that Judge Charles Rubin had shown bias against her and was seeking publicity from the case.

Gabor was ordered to complete 120 hours of community service last October when Rubin found her guilty of assaulting police officer Paul Kramer after he stopped her in Beverly Hills in her Rolls-Royce for a traffic violation. Kramer alleged Gabor had slapped him and swore at him.

In March the director of a homeless shelter where Gabor had worked sent a letter to Rubin saying the actress had completed her 120 hours. But in a hearing on May 1, Rubin found Gabor had served only 34½ hours, ordered her to complete the other 85½ hours, and added 60 hours on as a sanction, bringing the total to 145½ hours still to be performed.

Japanese prince to wed in June 29

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's royal wedding, which officials announced Friday would be held in June, will be heavy with pomp and tradition. In one of the final formalities before the ceremony, imperial messenger Yasuo Shigeta, dressed in a somber gray morning coat and carrying a silk top hat, called on Prince Aya's fiancée, Kiko Kawashima, and her parents at their home Friday to inform them the royal nuptials are to be held on June 29.

Mis Kawashima lives with her parents and younger brother in an apartment on the campus of Gakushuin University, where she is a student of psychology and where her father, Tatsuhiko, teaches economics. Gakushuin is Aya's alma-mater, and where he met his 23-year-old fiancée.

For the past two years Aya has been studying zoology — he has a particular interest in catfish — at Oxford University, and he is not expected to return to Japan until less than two weeks before the ceremony. Aya, 24, will be the first imperial family member to marry since Emperor Akishito's cousin, Prince Norihito, wed in December 1984. Aya is next in line to the chrysanthemum throne after his brother, Crown Prince Naruhito, who is 30 and has yet to choose a bride.

Blast in Philippine plane claims 7 lives

MANILA (AP) — An explosion sparked a fire aboard a Philippine Airlines jet with 119 people aboard Friday, killing seven and injuring at least 30, officials said.

The plane was being towed to the runway at Manila's domestic airport when it was rocked by an explosion, said Enrique Santos, vice president of the airline.

"There was an explosion in front of me and there was a very bad smell," said passenger Isidro Retaso, 33, of Iloilo. Ma. Retaso said other explosions followed the first one.

"They were still demonstrating the safety equipment when it occurred," she said. "There were three explosions, loud explosions, and the ceiling shattered."

On the second explosion, I immediately opened the emergency exit.

The cabin filled with smoke but most of those on board managed to escape by sliding down emergency chutes before flames engulfed the plane, Santos said.

Santos said officials had not debriefed the crew and did not know what caused the explosion.

Carrascano said there had been no bomb threats.

Dante Santos, president of Philippine Airlines, said flames swept through the plane in only four minutes. The blast apparently occurred near the centre of the passenger cabin, near where the bodies were found, he said.

Initial reports said there was an explosion inside the cabin,

maybe in one of the passenger's baggage," Santos said.

Santos said the takeoff had been delayed slightly due to heavy air traffic. One official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was possible that a bomb was placed on the plane and that it was intended to explode in the air.

But the official said there was no firm evidence of a bomb.

It was not known how many foreigners were on board, but officials said one Japanese male was treated for burns.

Officials said the aircraft was leased by Philippine Airlines last November.

Friday's accident was the worst aviation mishap in Manila since last July, when a Philippine Airlines BAC1-11 overshoot the runway on a flight from Zamboanga and slammed into a busy highway.

Eight people, all of them on the ground, were killed and 91 people were injured.

Aquino cousin refuses to answer questions before coup commission

MANILA (AP) — President Corazon Aquino's estranged cousin denied any role in a failed coup last year, but invoked his right against self-incrimination 33 times Friday in refusing to answer investigators' questions.

Eduardo "danding" Cojuangco, a business tycoon and former associate of the late Ferdinand Marcos, last November had slipped back into the country from the United States, where he had lived since his cousin, Mrs. Aquino, took office in the 1986 uprising that toppled Marcos.

There was widespread speculation of a link between his return and the Dec. 1-9 coup attempt, in which 113 people were killed and more than 600 wounded.

During the Marcos administration, Cojuangco was the most powerful figure in the Philippine business community. He has been mentioned as a possible presidential candidate in the 1992 elections.

During his appearance before a government commission investigating the putsch, Cojuangco's lawyer, Estelito Mendoza, read a lengthy statement citing constitutional guarantees against self-incrimination.

"In light, therefore, of the above, Mr. Cojuangco invokes his right to remain silent as he affirms, and is prepared to affirm this under oath, that he had no knowledge of, much less complicity or participation in, the failed coup d'etat of December 1989," Mendoza said.

Senior Deputy Commission Counsel Charles Anastacio then asked Cojuangco if he denied any role in the coup attempt. "I do," Cojuangco replied.

Cojuangco then invoked his right against self-incrimination rather than respond to 33 questions, including one from commission Chairman Hilario

Davide about whether he was a Filipino who loves his country.

Aquino appointed the commission last December to investigate the December putsch, the bloodiest and strongest of the six attempts to oust her.

During a speech after the coup attempt, Aquino said Cojuangco, Vice President Salvador Laurel and opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile should answer to the people about their possible roles in the rebellion.

All three denied involvement. Enrile was arrested last February on rebellion and murder charges and was freed on bail. No trial date has been set.

"One of our major tasks is to find out the causes and solutions of this coup," said Commission Member Ricardo Romulo. "Mr. Cojuangco being a major businessman and political leader in this country, we were hoping he would help us."

Peasant Party drops out of Romanian parliament

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — The National Peasant Party, one of the three leading parties, has dropped out of Romania's makeshift parliament to protest recent violent attacks on opposition leaders, the Romanian news agency Romspreas said Friday.

The agency said Ion Diaconescu, vice president of the Peasant Party, announced the withdrawal to a session of the parliament, known as the Provisional Council of National Unity.

It said without giving details that Diaconescu cited the level of violence in the current election campaign as the party's reason for pulling out of the provisional parliament.

The Peasant Party was one of Romania's main political parties before World War II and claims to have attracted some 600,000 members since Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was ousted by popular revolt last December.

On Wednesday, Ion Ratiu, the Peasants' candidate for president in the May 20 elections, joined with another opposition leader, Radu Campeanu of the National Liberal Party, in offering to withdraw from the presidential race.

The two said they would pull out if Interim President Ion Iliescu, who is favoured to win, also

withdrew and agreed that the president be elected by the new parliament instead of by direct ballot.

Iliescu and his National Salvation Front (NSF) are favoured to win both the presidential and parliamentary votes.

The National Peasants Party, the National Liberal Party and other opposition groups consistently have charged the front with misusing public funds to finance its election campaign and with unfairly dominating national media.

Ratiu and Campeanu both have been physically attacked during electoral rallies in southern Romania in the past two weeks.

While they did not directly blame the NSF for orchestrating the attacks, some Romanian newspapers said the attacks were meant to discourage opposition and the electorate in the first free elections in more than half a century.

The council is dominated by the front, a loose grouping of ex-Communists, technocrats and intellectuals. It has acted as a de facto legislature since its formation in February after opponents accused the NSF, which took power immediately after Ceausescu's fall, of governing un-

democratically.

Some 4,000 anti-government demonstrators occupied downtown University Square for the 19th straight day Thursday night, as their dialogue with the government appeared set to resume Saturday.

Shouting slogans against Communism, the protesters continued, to press for the resignation of Iliescu.

Some protesters also demanded the resignation of the Provisional Council of National Unity.

One of the groups leading the protest — the National Alliance for the Proclamation of Timisoara, held a news conference Thursday demanding that the talks with Iliescu be broadcast live on television.

The Western city of Timisoara is the site of a massacre that sparked the December revolution.

The proclamation of Timisoara, adopted last month at a rally there, demands the formal exclusion of former Communist officials, including Iliescu, from politics.

Dialogue between Iliescu and the protesters is due to resume Saturday. But the government has not said whether the talks will be filmed.

Protesters have refused to disclose the specifics of the demands they are advancing in the talks. Iliescu has ruled out any substantive discussion on barring ex-Communists or of delaying the election, arguing that both the election law and date were approved by the provisional parliament.

The delegation meeting Iliescu will include poet Ana Blandiana, student representative Mariam Munteanu, George Serban and Stelian Tanase of the Intellectual Group for Social Dialogue — and a cameraman.

Meanwhile, leading former dissident Doina Cornea announced that she was joining 62 hunger strikers in the Bucharest protest. Some have taken nothing but tea for 11 days.

Cornea resigned from the National Salvation Front in January after accusing it of being another totalitarian party like the former Communist Party.

In a letter made available to the Associated Press Thursday, Cornea told the European Parliament in Strasbourg:

"The current representatives of the state power and of the political power are not the same as those who died in the streets (last December) to escape from Communism."